

**State Advisory Council on Refugee Assistance and Services (SAC)****Background**

The State Advisory Council on Refugee Assistance and Services (SAC) is an advisory body comprised of individuals with a cross-section of experience from all sectors involved in or affected by the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) in California. The SAC was established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in accordance with the Refugee Act of 1980. The SAC advises CDSS on refugee issues and ensures citizen involvement in policy discussions crucial to the development of a comprehensive, successful, cost-effective, and culturally and linguistically sensitive RRP.

The CDSS Refugee Programs Bureau (RPB) has direct oversight and provides support for the SAC. The RPB keeps the SAC informed of current issues affecting the RRP in California and solicits input from the SAC on the administration of the RRP.

**Membership**

The SAC consists of 15 individual seats with selection criteria that consider ethnic representation, expertise, constituency, geographical location, and association representation. Membership in the SAC is defined by two categories, public members and organizational/agency members. The terms of appointment for all members are for three years. Seven of the 15 seats are filled from various refugee groups. The seven public members are only allowed to serve two consecutive terms. The eight organization/agency members may serve as many consecutive terms as their nominating agency allows them. The RPB holds one seat; its representative is appointed from the refugee community.

Eight seats on the SAC are nominated from the following organizations and agencies:

- The Governor's Office
- The County Welfare Directors Association
- County Refugee Coordinators
- The Department of Health Services
- The Refugee Programs Bureau
- The Local Refugee Health Program Coordinator
- The State Refugee Forum
- The Joint Voluntary Agency Committee of California

**Purpose**

The purpose for the SAC is to share information on refugee resettlement issues that are being encountered locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. The SAC plays an important role in providing input on the type of services that the refugees need in order to overcome obstacles in education, employment, attainment of citizenship, transportation, housing, and discrimination. The SAC members assist CDSS to evaluate policies and programs that will help transition refugees in their local communities. The SAC also provides a forum for exchanging concerns and ideas regarding housing, child care, access to health and mental health, aging, and crime prevention services for refugees.

For information on the SAC nomination process, to obtain a nomination form, or for a list of SAC members, please click on this link:

[www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram/StateAdvis\\_37.htm](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram/StateAdvis_37.htm)